

SOMEWHERE INBETWEEN

"Double Dealing"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - RESIDENCE/GARAGE - MORNING. 1

An upper class, well maintained garden is laid out before us, with tall trees swaying in the breeze behind a long, wide garage, that has a swing door opening on to a long driveway heading off screen. The sun is out, the birds are singing - it's a perfect day.

So when the tranquility is rudely shattered moments later by a sudden DRUM ROLL echoing out from inside the garage, it's no surprise that every bird nestled quietly in the trees around scatters, flapping away and into the sky.

Somebody inside the garage is beating the heck out of a drum kit, with badly-timed rolls and splashes making it sound as though John Bonham is losing a fight with the Tin Man.

The noise of the drums is soon joined by a low, rumbling sound - somebody is playing a bass guitar in there too. Equally badly.

The attempt at melody rages on for a few more beats until a bed-headed and pretty tense-looking CHRIS stalks into frame, wrapping a dressing gown round himself and muttering darkly under his breath.

Chris heads for the swing door and grabs the handle, wrenching the door up and stepping into:

2 INT. GARAGE - MORNING. 2

As Chris steps into the spacious, well-stocked garage, noticeably free of any cars, a wedge of sunlight follows him inside, creeping across the garage floor.

TWIST (O.S.)

What the- hey!! What are you trying to do, kill us both?

Chris pauses, looks up, and then SIGHS, lowering the garage door carefully behind him.

He walks further inside and towards TWIST and DANYAEL, the source of the noise. Twist sits behind a beaten-up old drum kit, glaring indignantly back at Chris, while Danyael is wearing a bass guitar and trying to blend into the background as an obviously angry Chris marches over.

CHRIS

What in the blo-

(CONTINUED)

TWIST

(interrupts)

Ah! You promised you wouldn't complain if we made any noise.

CHRIS

'Noise,' yes. That was what I'd class as a 'racket,' that's taking things up a notch. Mardi Gras isn't until February!

TWIST

(insulted)

'Racket'?

CHRIS

What on earth are you two playing at in here?

DANYAEL

(mumbles)

It was the White Stripes...

CHRIS

What?

Twist stands from behind the kit, hands on hips.

TWIST

We were playing a song, Chris. You know, music? Something people a lot younger and cooler than you listen to these days?

CHRIS

(frowns)

Don't get smart, Twist. It's only...

(checks watch)

It's barely nine-fifteen, I hardly think that's any fit time at all for you two to be doing... whatever the hell it was you were doing just then.

TWIST

Look, what were we supposed to do? We were bored, we'd already drank all the beer in the house, so when Dan and I found this kit and guitar, we figured we'd, you know, make a little noise.

CHRIS

A little noise wouldn't have been a problem. A little noise wouldn't have woken Julie and myself up!

TWIST

Okay, waking Julie up, that's my bad, but why do you need to sleep? We're fricken vampires!

CHRIS

That's not the point!

Danyaël steps between them, hands raised diplomatically.

DANYAEL

Guys! Come on, we don't need to fight about this.

Chris scowls and steps off, and Twist sits back down, pouting.

CHRIS

We're only housesitting for another day until Mr. Hickman gets back from that conference, and when he arrives we stand to make a tidy sum of cash from this endeavour. If we then have to pay him most of that back because of the damage you two have doubtlessly caused, I will not be pleased.

TWIST

(grumpy)

Bum job anyway. Why the heck are we looking after somebody's house? Shouldn't we be going out and killing bad guys?

DANYAEL

Yeah, good point. Why are we here?

CHRIS

(wearily)

I explained it to you both perfectly well the other day...

TWIST

Well, explain it again. Just assume I wasn't listening.

CHRIS

(darkly)

You never are.

TWIST

Chris! Find a point and get to it already.

CHRIS

The chap who owns this place needed a favour, and we needed a place to stay before we carry on to our next stop. I knew we just needed to stay put for two days and pick up some easy money, so I said yes.

TWIST

And where were we while all of this negotiating was going on? All I know is we pulled up outside and you told me not to break anything!

CHRIS

You pair were off doing... whatever it is you keep going and doing.

Danyaël leans back against the tall bass amplifier and lights a cigarette, letting Chris and Twist fight this one out.

TWIST

Okay. Good. All on the same page now, boss. Thanks. Can we get back to jamming now?

Chris looks at Danyaël, who just shrugs.

DANYAEL

Hey, it keeps her busy. Would you rather we let her loose inside the house with this much energy?

CHRIS

(beat)
Good point.

He turns and heads back for the door, carefully sliding it up and stepping back outside, pausing to shout back:

CHRIS (cont'd)

Just try and keep it below a hundred decibels, alright? We're heading off soon, and I don't want the entire New Orleans police force on our backs because you pair managed to make enough noise to bring down an airliner.

TWIST

(salutes)
Hai!

With a last suspicious look, Chris closes the door and heads back to the house. Twist waits a few beats, then:

TWIST (cont'd)

So... that amp go up to eleven or what?

Danyael raises an eyebrow - and then GRINS at her. Twist cackles gleefully and counts him back in with four cymbal crashes, and as the duo blast back into another medley of noise, we mercifully:

BLACK OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 INT. BLACK FORD - DAY. 3

Chris is driving as Twist, Danyael and JULIE snooze in the passenger and back seats respectively, as soft classical music pipes through the car stereo.

Chris looks like he's enjoying the music, until Twist shifts in her sleep - and yet still manages to reach over and turn the radio to another station without waking up.

As Buckwheat Zydeco's cajun classic 'Jambalaya' fills the car, Chris looks round at her, then with a defeated shake of his head gets back to driving.

4 EXT. FREEWAY - DAY. 4

The song continues over the scene as the Ford drives along a freeway, framed on each side by thick Louisiana forests, passing a large sign: 'Next Exit, New Orleans City Centre.'

The Ford indicates and pulls off the freeway, following the curve of the round road and out of view.

5 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - CITY STREET - DAY. 5

Chris steers round a corner in the heart of the city, the streets thronged with people enjoying the warm afternoon, the streets full of life on two levels as the two-tiered houses overlooking the road are also packed with bodies.

The Ford passes a large mansion and follows a road that leads away from the bustle of the city centre, heading out towards a more thickly-wooded part of town.

6 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - MANON'S ESTATE - DAY. 6

The Ford approaches a massive stately home, overlooking a small bayou to its rear, and shaded from the sun by selectively-placed trees lining its grounds.

7 INT. BLACK FORD - DAY. 7

Chris brings the car to a halt, leaving the engine running and turning the music down as he nudges Twist to wake her up.

TWIST
(waking up)
Hmf? Whu? Antonio, no, what would
Melanie say...

CHRIS
Glad to see your senses are as
sharp as ever.

(CONTINUED)

TWIST
 (blinks)
 Are we there yet?

CHRIS
 For once, yes.

Chris leans back and gently shakes Danyael, who wakes up with a SNORT, and then Julie, who YAWNS as she comes round, before Chris turns his attention back to the house opposite them.

JULIE
 (stretches)
 I don't know how you guys keep up with all this travelling, I've only taken two trips with you and I feel like I'm stuck in another time zone already!

DANYAEL
 You get used to it when you don't need to sleep.

TWIST
 (wrinkles nose)
 What's that smell?

CHRIS
 New Orleans.
 (inhales deeply)
 Fresh forest air, is what it is.

TWIST
 (eyes him)
 Okay, if that's what you want to call it. I call it 'a stink.'
 (sees house)
 Oo, pretty. Who lives there?

CHRIS
 The man we're here to see. Jacques Manon.

Chris motions for Danyael to pass him his backpack from the back seat, and once Danyael does so Chris rustles through it, producing a local newspaper and showing it to Twist.

Chris has circled an article about a local book dealer, celebrating a recent find of many rare and previously lost books and collections on the grounds of his estate. A photo of a rugged man in his thirties with neat, dark hair accompanies the article.

JULIE
 The book dealer guy?

TWIST

(off photo)

Me-ow. Please tell me this is the
guy!

CHRIS

(takes paper back)

That's him, and you only get to
meet him if you promise to be on
your best behaviour.

TWIST

(starts to protest)

But-

CHRIS

(firm)

Best behaviour.

Twist folds her arms and pouts like a sulking schoolgirl,
then nods. Chris turns to Danyael, who chuckles.

DANYAEL

Hey, don't worry about me. I only
have one kind of behaviour.

CHRIS

Glad I can always count on one of
you two. Not like that time we met
up with those actors in Los
Angeles.

TWIST

(tetchy)

I said I was sorry for that! And
besides, we paid for the damages,
right?

CHRIS

No, I think you'll find I paid for
the damages.

TWIST

(shrugs)

Same diff. You won't get me a Gold
Card of my own.

Chris opens the car and steps outside.

Julie is already out as Chris closes his door, then turns
back to the car and speaks to Twist through an open window.

CHRIS

Wait here until I let Monsieur Manon know we're here, then just bring the car up to the front of the house.

TWIST

(off sunlight)

Well, I wasn't planning on following you, chief!

Chris turns and heads away from the car, making for a pair of tall steel gates at the end of the house's long, winding driveway.

JULIE

So what are we hoping to find here? I mean, don't get me wrong, nice place and all, but it seems a little...

CHRIS

Normal?

JULIE

Yeah.

CHRIS

You'll see. Trust me.

There's a small intercom box which Chris uses to buzz for the porter.

PORTER

(filtered; through intercom)

Oui?

CHRIS

Hello there, my name is Christopher Berkeley, I have an appointment to see Monsieur Manon.

PORTER

Ah, yes, the Englishman. One moment, *s'il vous plait*.

Chris steps back as there is a BUZZING sound, and the tall gates slowly swing open.

Chris turns and motions to Twist, who wriggles across into the Ford's driver's seat and starts the car, aiming it towards the driveway as Chris and Julie start to walk up it towards the house.

9

EXT. MANON'S ESTATE - MANOR ENTRANCE - DAY.

9

Parking the Ford where there is plenty of shade from the tall trees, Danyael steps out and join Chris and Julie as they approach the steps leading up to the mansion's impressive entrance, the weathered regional architecture covered with delicate trails of ivy.

Twist grabs a backpack from inside the car before nudging the door closed and joining the others.

TWIST

(whistles)

Nice place! You say he made all this from trading in books?

CHRIS

Books and other artefacts, yes. Think of him as a more scrupulous version of our old friend Rengler.

TWIST

Only without the healthy interest in black magic and burning desire to dissect Spook here, right?

Danyael SHUDDERS at the memory as Chris steps towards the heavy oak front door. He reaches out a hand to knock, but the door opens to reveal GERARD, the butler, before he can. Gerard is a short, podgy man with neat grey hair.

GERARD

Monsieur Berkeley?

CHRIS

(nods)

And these are my associates, Madame Kingston, Mademoiselle McFadden and Monsieur Norton.

TWIST

(nudges Danyael)

Hear that? I'm a 'mademoiselle' now! Don't I just feel all fancy.

Danyael grins as the duo follow Chris and Gerard into:

10

INT. MANOR - DAY.

10

The main hall of the manor is long and wide, with a high ceiling allowing for plenty of wall space to show off Manon's collections - paintings, *objet's d'art*, rows of books and other relics.

(CONTINUED)

Chris and the others are suitably impressed by the wealth on display, craning their views up towards the ceiling to take in the mural painted there.

MANON (O.S.)

You like it? It took fifty men a month to finish!

They look back - and approaching them is the man from the article, MANON. He's dressed casually, in a white flannel shirt and pants, his hair swept back and sunglasses slotted into his hairline. His accent is thick and French.

He reaches Chris first, and the two shake hands warmly, before Manon casts his eye across the others.

MANON (cont'd)

These must be your friends?

CHRIS

Yes, this is Julie, Twist and Danyael.

DANYAEL

Hey.

JULIE

Bonjour.

TWIST

(winks)

Blaireau.

Manon pauses, cocking his head sideways at Twist and looking puzzled, before Chris quickly draws his attention again.

CHRIS

Don't mind her, she's American.

MANON

Ah, I see. That explains a lot.

Julie leans back and whispers to Twist.

JULIE

What did you say?

TWIST

(shrugs)

I dunno, I don't speak French.

MANON

You and your team must be 'ungry after your journey, *n'est ce pas?*

(MORE)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

MANON (cont'd)

Come, we are settling down for some lunch, I would be 'onoured if you would join us.

Manon waves for the team to follow, and with a glance round to the others, Chris nods for them to fall in line.

11 INT. MANOR - CONSERVATORY - DAY.

11

Manon leads them into a lavishly-furnished conservatory, heaving with plant life which creates an almost tropical atmosphere. A long, wide table has a light buffet spread across it. The overhanging trees outside keep the whole room thankfully free of any direct sunlight.

MANON

I was expecting some company later today, but I found myself impatient and decided to sample my cook's wares! Help yourself, *non*?

Chris opens his mouth to say thanks, but Twist is already at the table, rapidly scooping up a plateful of goodies.

CHRIS

(hisses)

Twist!

Twist already has a mouthful of food as she turns round.

TWIST

What?

CHRIS

(beat)

Never mind.

JULIE

(to Manon)

I must say, Monsieur Manon, this is a pretty impressive place you have.

MANON

(smoothly)

Please, call me Jacques. A beautiful lady such as yourself should 'ave no need for formality with me.

Manon scoops up Julie's hand and kisses it. She chuckles despite herself, not used to such gallantry, but Chris narrows his eyes, not looking too pleased.

Manon grins at Julie, who blushes a little, before Chris steps into frame, diverting Manon's attention.

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

You'll forgive me for wanting to get to business, but as I'm sure you can appreciate, we are both busy men.

MANON

But of course. Shall we leave your friends 'ere while we go and discuss matters in my study?

CHRIS

(to Julie)

Can you keep an eye on these two?

JULIE

They've got warm weather, comfy chairs and plenty of food. They won't be going anywhere.

Chris nods, and Manon gestures for Chris to follow him as he heads out of the conservatory.

Julie takes a seat in one of the large wicker chairs, each with two huge cushions, and picks out a few bites from the buffet as Twist starts piling up her second plateful.

12 INT. MANOR - STUDY - DAY.

12

Manon pushes open a pair of double doors and leads Chris into his study, a contrast to the breezy air of the conservatory. The room has a large set of bay windows overlooking the woods and bayou outside, but almost every available piece of wall space is covered with bookshelves.

Manon heads for a wooden desk at the far end of the room and flops into a reclining chair, propping his feet up on the desk and sighing contentedly.

MANON

A man always needs a place he can call his own. I 'ave so many people in and out of this 'ouse at all 'ours, I always make sure this place is where I can come to be alone.

CHRIS

(looking round)

You certainly have an eye for your trade, Jacques. May I call you 'Jacques'?

Manon shrugs, and Chris walks closer to one set of bookshelves, peering at the titles on the spines.

CHRIS (cont'd)

I can see a few items here that would make you the envy of collectors the world over, and I-

MANON

(interrupts)

But you did not come 'ere to discuss books with me.

Chris looks round, and Manon smiles broadly at him. Chris allows himself a grin and shakes his head.

CHRIS

I didn't want to seem too forward.

MANON

Pfft! I am a businessman, Chris. I am too used to dealing with insensitive *piqûres* who have no respect for the printed word, only the bottom line and their cold, 'ard cash. I see in you someone I can relate to. A man who understands the importance of what I do.

CHRIS

Believe me, I understand.

Manon smiles again, then springs to his feet, heading for a framed landscape painting on one wall. He removes it to reveal a safe, which he deftly unlocks and swings open, reaching inside to retrieve a small, cloth-wrapped package.

Chris' eyes light up as Manon walks back to his desk and lays the small package down, stepping back and inviting Chris to unwrap it.

Chris tentatively reaches forward, folding back the cloth until he reveals a small, brass-plated object, looking like an archaic engine component. Chris seems pleased with whatever it is.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Perfect.

MANON

This is what you seek?

CHRIS

This is very much what I seek. How did you find it?

Manon shrugs as he sits back down.

MANON

The source on my grounds that gave me so many of my recent finds still has much to offer. I believe there are many more items down there, if only someone with the right qualities were to go and look.

CHRIS

'Down there'?

MANON

Ah, *oui*. There are a few things I should explain to you.

Manon reaches out and wraps the component back up, and Chris has a look of almost longing in his eyes.

MANON (cont'd)

As I 'ave said, I am a businessman. This *tresor* is yours if you would do a service for me.

CHRIS

Name your price. Short of unleashing armageddon, it'll be worth it.

MANON

(laughs)

You 'ave been in this business too long, *monsieur*! Your eyes have seen much conflict, I can tell.

CHRIS

They'd see a whole lot less if I can find more pieces like the one you're holding.

MANON

Bon. Point taken.

Manon puts the piece down and leans forward, fixing Chris with a serious stare.

MANON (cont'd)

I 'ave a problem. One that I alone can do nothing about, but a... man such as yourself should 'ave no difficulty solving.

CHRIS

(beat)

So you know what I am, I take it.

MANON

I know of what you almost became,
but what you are now is a mystery,
even to yourself, I'm sure.

Chris seems to be growing a little impatient with Manon's flowery speech.

CHRIS

Yes, I'm a mystery. You mentioned a problem you needed my help with?

MANON

(beat)

Indeed. What I need 'elp with is-

CRASH! One of the bay windows suddenly EXPLODES inwards as someone leaps through them, sending shards of glass scattering across the room.

Manon throws his arms up and dives backwards, but Chris springs to his feet, instantly alert.

The figure that jumped into the room stands, shrugging off some stray flecks of glass - it's humanoid, but its dark green skin, thick, muscular arms and wickedly taloned hands tell us it's far from human, as does its lizard-like head.

It hunches down slightly, ready to attack, and GROWLS at Chris as Manon recovers to his feet, registering the creature at last.

Manon sighs and gestures towards the creature.

MANON (cont'd)

That.

The creature HISSES - and then SPRINGS FORWARD to attack, and we quickly:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

13 INT. MANOR - STUDY - DAY.

13

Chris readies himself as the creature leaps towards him, but its brute force knocks him off his feet, and the creature pushes away from Chris to land neatly back on its feet, as Chris hurtles backwards and lands painfully against a tall bookshelf.

Manon races for the door, but the creature cuts him off, LUNGING for him with a swipe of its claws. Manon manages to duck back, the creature's claws raking a deep furrow into the door, but Manon loses his footing and hits the deck.

The creature looms over him, snarling - but Chris leaps into frame, tackling the beast and shoving it away from Manon.

Manon gets to his feet as Chris struggles with the creature, trying to restrain its flailing arms.

CHRIS

(yells; to Manon)

Get Twist and the others!

Manon nods, throws the door open and races off towards the conservatory, leaving Chris to his fight.

The creature GRUNTS with exertion as it plants both hands on Chris' chest and THROWS him backwards.

As Chris SLAMS into the wall, knocking two sets of shelves and their contents off the wall and all over him, we cut to:

14 INT. MANOR - CONSERVATORY - DAY.

14

Twist is merrily piling up her third plate of food as a red-faced Manon barrels into the room.

JULIE

Monsieur Manon?

MANON

(panting)

Chris... needs some 'elp!

Julie glances at Danyael then springs to her feet, the two of them following Manon back out of the conservatory.

Twist looks from them to her plate and back, then puts the plate down with a sigh.

TWIST

And it was all going so well...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

She hops out of her chair, grabs her backpack from the floor and races back out of the conservatory, as we cut back to:

15 INT. MANOR - STUDY - DAY.

15

The creature has Chris by the throat with one hand, and is using the other to punch him as Manon and the others burst into the room.

Chris gasps as he takes another hit, before shouting across to the rest of the team.

CHRIS

Twist! My sword!

Danyael and Julie rush over and grab the beast, trying to wrench it away from Chris, as Twist fumbles inside her backpack, drawing out Chris' katana.

TWIST

Heads up!

She throws it towards him just as Danyael and Julie manage to drag the creature away from Chris.

Chris deftly catches his katana and SWINGS for the beast, but it swats the sword away with one of its claws, ELBOWING Danyael with its other arm and dropping him to the floor.

Chris raises his sword again but takes a swift KICK to the chest. He staggers backwards, giving the creature time to bound over to Manon's desk.

Before Chris can recover, the creature snatches up the cloth-wrapped brass component and bounds back towards the window.

Twist runs after it, but it's across the room and back out through the empty window frame before she can get to it.

The room catches its breath. Julie helps a woozy Danyael back to his feet as Twist turns to Chris, shrugging apologetically.

TWIST (cont'd)

Sorry, Chris.

CHRIS

It's alright, you did your best.

Chris turns to Manon, pointing at him with his katana.

CHRIS (cont'd)

We need to talk.

A guilty looking Manon nods his head, before we cut to:

16

INT. MANOR - LIBRARY - DAY.

16

The team are assembled round one of several long reading tables in the spacious, well-stocked two-floored library, waiting as Manon unfurls a map of the grounds across the tabletop before them.

MANON

We discovered the rift 'ere,
several months ago.

He points to a spot at the far end of his grounds, close to the neighbouring swamplands.

MANON (cont'd)

I 'ad some property developers out there, looking for somewhere suitable to build a small pool house or something similar, when one of them managed to accidentally fall down an abandoned well shaft.

TWIST

How do you 'accidentally' do something like that?

CHRIS

A fault line, I'm guessing. Did he say the ground just gave way beneath him, by any chance?

MANON

(nods)
Exactement.

CHRIS

Whoever covered over the well didn't do a very good job. Happens a lot more than you'd like it to.

JULIE

So what did your men find down there?

MANON

Many things. Some valuable and pleasantly well received, others... less so.

Manon steps away from the table for a moment, returning with a thick leather book which he lays by the map, leafing through it as he continues speaking.

(CONTINUED)

MANON (cont'd)

At first, all we found was what appeared to be the foundations and basement level of the previous 'ouse that lay on these grounds.

CHRIS

Any idea how long ago?

MANON

Non. Best guess so far is about fifty years. That's not important - within these levels, we found a treasure cove of all manner of objects. Books, paintings, sculptures, some with obvious mystical significance.

TWIST

An Aladdin's cave of the underworld, right?

CHRIS

And I'm guessing you also unearthed a nest of more creatures like the one that attacked us?

Manon nods, finding what he was looking for in the book and turning it to the others. The worn page shows an illustration of the creature Chris fought in the study.

CHRIS (cont'd)

(nods)

I thought I recognised it. It's a vinnlan, subterranean-dwelling creature with a highly-developed hoarding instinct.

MANON

They seemed to 'ave made their 'ome there many years earlier. There are tunnels leading back out into the swampland that they 'ave been using to get in and out. They didn't take too kindly to the removal of the items from the underground rooms, and 'ave been trying to steal back everything we took.

CHRIS

Well, there's obviously a reason for that.

JULIE

Peace of mind?

CHRIS

No, I'm thinking more like they understand the power of these objects, and they're concerned that moving them could lead to bad things.

DANYAEL

'Bad things' with a capital 'b' and 't,' right?

Chris look answers Danyael's question, as Chris turns to Manon.

CHRIS

You said there were several items taken from that underground lair. Would you care to show me?

Manon nods, and as he SNAPS the book shut, we cut to:

INT. MANOR - TROPHY ROOM - DAY.

We're inside a more secure part of the house, looking at a thick iron door as the BEEP of an electronic lock sounds from the other side.

The iron door opens with a HISS of pressurised air and slowly swings open, allowing Manon to step through and lead the others inside.

The room holds glass-covered cabinets and displays that show off a wealth of arcane objects - golden masks, weapons, stone tablets, parchments. Twist and Chris share a knowing look as they step inside that Manon notices.

MANON

Is something the matter?

CHRIS

Not really, it's just-

TWIST

The last time we saw a collection like this, the guy behind it was an evil warlock who was trying to open a gateway into the netherworld.

(folds arms)

That's all.

Manon chuckles as Twist fixes him with an accusing stare.

MANON

My interest is purely as a collector. I know little of the world of magics and witchcraft.

TWIST

Yeah. That's what he said. At first.

CHRIS

(scolds)

Twist!

TWIST

What? You act all pally now, but just you watch, turn your back for five seconds and bang! We're on an operating table, having our kidneys taken out to be made part of some freaky-ass living mural.

Twist notices Julie's horrified look, and shrugs.

TWIST (cont'd)

True story.

CHRIS

Can we get back to business, please?

Chris paces around the room, noticing the CCTV cameras watching him and the large alarm system box by the door.

MANON

If those vinnlans, or whatever you just called them got into 'ere, the results would be disastrous.

TWIST

(narrows eyes)

I thought you said you didn't know what any of these things were for?

MANON

I don't. But there are people paying me a lot of money to take them that do, and I can't afford to lose my merchandise!

Twist HUFFS at Manon's mercenary spirit and marches over to Chris, speaking quietly to him so Manon can't eavesdrop.

TWIST

So what's going on here? Is this guy evil or what?

Chris is deep in thought, studying the closest cabinet, squinting as he tries to decipher the writings on the two stone tablets inside.

TWIST (cont'd)
 (nudges him)
 Ground Control to Major Tom?

CHRIS
 (distracted)
 Hmm?

TWIST
 I asked if this Manon guy is cool,
 or if he's a bad guy and I can kick
 his ass yet.

CHRIS
 (shakes head)
 He doesn't know what he has here.
 If he did, he'd have this under
 even more security.

TWIST
 (gulps)
 Now that doesn't sound good...

CHRIS
 Trust me. Keep quiet and let me
 handle this.

Chris turns back round and walks towards Manon.

CHRIS (cont'd)
 I think you'd better show us where
 the entrance to these underground
 levels are, monsieur.

MANON
 Is there a problem?

CHRIS
 Not yet. But there will be, if we
 don't get down there and sort this
 mess out.

Manon frowns, looking somewhat concerned, as we cut to:

Chris leads Manon and Julie across the neatly-trimmed back garden of the manor, heading towards the edge of a thick patch of trees that leads out onto the swamp beyond.

Julie glances round to see Twist and Danyael doing their best to follow them, forced by the sun overhead to stick to the shadows.

Manon notices the two vampires, frowns as he watches them for a moment, and then turns to Chris.

MANON

Your two associates, they're-

CHRIS

Vampires, yes.

Chris registers Manon's look of concern.

CHRIS (cont'd)

Don't worry, they're harmless.

(beat)

As far as you're concerned, anyway.

Manon nods, but doesn't look too convinced as he leads Chris and Julie in through the treeline.

We hang back to pick up Twist and Danyael, as they finally make it to the edge of the trees the long way round.

DANYAEL

I don't trust this guy.

TWIST

Me either, but Chris says he knows what's what, so I'm gonna play along for now. But he looks at me funny even once, I'm gonna teach him how to play the tuba with his ass cheeks.

Danyael pauses, throwing a puzzled look at Twist.

DANYAEL

That made no sense.

TWIST

(beat)

Shut up.

She steps into the patch of trees, and into:

Twist and Danyael join the others, looking down over a literal hole in the ground. Helpful plastic barricades mark out the jagged tear in the ground, with pitch blackness beyond it. A ladder heading down has been helpfully bolted to the inside of the hole itself.

TWIST

Down there?

MANON

I'm afraid so. I 'ave plenty of torches if you need them.

CHRIS
We'll be fine.

Julie clears her throat to get Chris' attention, and he silently curses, realising his omission.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Well, we will need one, at least.

Manon grins at Julie, who rolls her eyes as we cut to:

Julie leads the way, shining her torch through the darkness to reveal what used to be a long, wide corridor of a house of some kind. Planks and scaffolding are helping the walls and ceiling stay in place as the group make their way through the gloom.

JULIE
So what happened to this old house?
Did it just sink into the ground or something?

CHRIS
Given our proximity to the swamp,
that's very likely.

TWIST
And given the stinky bayou smell,
I'd say it's very likely.

DANYAEL
What are we looking for down here?

CHRIS
More artefacts like the one Manon
kept in that locked room. If I'm
right...

Chris trails off. Julie waits a beat, then nudges him.

JULIE
(prompts)
'If I'm right...'

CHRIS
(blinks)
Sorry?

TWIST
Alright, what is with you? That's
the second time you've spaced out
in the last half an hour.

(MORE)

TWIST (cont'd)
 Mind explaining to those of us
 without access to your inner
 monologue what the N'Sync is going
 on around here?

Chris looks at Twist, then takes Julie's torch from her hands and shines it towards a part of the wall further down the corridor.

CHRIS

That.

Following the beam, we see that part of the wall has fallen away, and poking out through the soil is some kind of stone archway, covered with symbols and indecipherable lettering.

TWIST

Oh.

The team start to head towards it, but Twist pauses as they do - from her perspective, the archway is GLOWING with a faint white light, but it fades away as quickly as it came.

Danyaël nudges her, and she blinks, snapping out of her trance.

DANYAEL

You okay? You zoned out for a second there.

Twist glances at him, then hurries past him to catch up to Chris, leaving the puzzled Danyaël behind.

TWIST

Chris, we can't go in there.

CHRIS

Why on Earth not?

TWIST

We just can't okay? I've got a bad feeling about it, and-

JULIE

Can I get a little light over here?

Chris shines the torch along the archway as Julie tries to make out the lettering. Danyaël lights a cigarette, keeping his lighter flame on to give the team a little more light to work with.

Twist watches them helplessly, knowing nothing she says is going to make them walk away - short of the truth behind what she just saw. And that's not an option.

CHRIS

Any ideas what that says?

JULIE

I'm not sure...

She takes the torch from Chris and steps closer to it, resting her hand against the sandy-coloured stone.

JULIE (cont'd)

It's definitely very old, but it doesn't look like any human dialect I've ever seen.

TWIST

More monsters, then?

JULIE

Could be. See this part here?

(points)

That's a universal set of symbols in any language.

DANYAEL

What does it mean?

JULIE

Those are the symbols for 'opening,' and 'evil.'

DANYAEL

An evil opening?

TWIST

Jessica Simpson's mouth?

CHRIS

A portal.

JULIE

Yup, and I'm getting the idea it's not a good one.

TWIST

Great. So, what, Manon's managed to unearth a Stargate that leads straight to Evil Central?

CHRIS

Only one way to find out.

Chris draws his katana and nods to Julie. She steps through the archway, the others falling in behind her.

We stay in the corridor, watching from a distance away as Twist and Danyael disappear through the arch - before three more of the vinnlans step out of the shadows, GROWLING menacingly at this intrusion into their home.

20 CONTINUED: (3)

20

The closest takes a step towards the archway, baring its fangs, before we cut to:

21 INT. UNDERGROUND NETWORK - CHAMBER - DAY.

21

The team are the only point of light in what appears to be a huge, darkened chamber.

TWIST
(calls out)
Danyael is gay!

The echoed 'Danyael is gay!' rings out around the room, and Twist cackles with laughter as Danyael glares at her.

DANYAEL
Not funny.

TWIST
(shoves him)
Ah, lighten up.

No sooner has she said that, than with a loud CLICK, a pair of glowing spheres blare into bright yellow light either side of the team.

Julie shields her eyes, but Chris manages to see what's going on - the two dirt-caked half-spheres are set into the sides of what appears to be a stone bridge, starting at the entrance to the archway and stretching off into the distance.

DANYAEL
Woah! What did you do?

TWIST
I didn't do anything! Chris?

Chris narrows his eyes and raises his sword.

CHRIS
Get ready, everyone.

JULIE
For what? There's nothing-

There is another CLICK, and the next two spheres in line along the bridge flicker to life. Then the next. Then the next, and so on with increasing speed until the entire room is filled with soft yellow light.

A large building that appears to be some kind of ruined temple waits at the far end of the bridge - but between the team and that are lots and lots of the vinnlan creatures, spread across the bridge itself and the floor of the chamber several fete below.

(CONTINUED)

They start to rouse themselves, grunting and hissing at the sudden light, but as a horde of glittering eyes fall on Chris and the others, the team realise they're in trouble.

JULIE (cont'd)

Uh... this isn't good, is it?

CHRIS

No, I'm afraid it isn't.

Twist SLAPS her forehead loudly in despair.

TWIST

I knew I shoulda stayed in that garage!

As the closest pack of vinnlans starts to rush towards the team, we quickly:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

22 INT. UNDERGROUND NETWORK - CHAMBER - DAY.

22

Chris is straight into the thick of things as the first group of vinnlans charge him, his katana flashing left and right to fend off the creature's claws.

JULIE

Twist! Weapons!

Twist nods, digging through her backpack and quickly passing out a sword each for Danyael and Julie, finally dropping the bag to reveal Duggan, her trusty baseball bat.

Twist grins as she sizes up a vinnlan climbing up over the edge of the bridge towards her.

TWIST

Batter up!

THWACK! She clocks the creature across its jaw and sends it shrieking back down to the chamber floor.

Julie and Danyael fight back as best they can, but it's Chris doing the most damage as he cuts a swathe through the vinnlans, backing up his sword attacks with BLASTS of blue magical energy, bowling the creatures over and knocking several back over the bridge.

JULIE

There's too many of them!

CHRIS

Fall back!

Julie starts to back up, but SHOUTS in alarm as more vinnlans surge through the archway towards her.

She finds herself back to back with Twist, the two girls surrounded by an increasing pack of the snarling monsters.

JULIE

Any ideas?

TWIST

(grits teeth)

I'm gonna go with 'hit' and then 'run.' In that order.

Twist YELLS as she charges forward, barging into the vinnlans attacking her, her bat CRACKING off skulls left and right as she swings.

(CONTINUED)

Danyael is knocked to the ground by one vinnlan, its heavy claws raking across his chest. He drops his sword and cries out in pain as it pins him to the ground.

JULIE

Danyael!

Julie is distracted for a moment - and is grabbed by two of the creatures. Kicking and struggling against them, she's helpless as another stalks up to her, HISSING.

Chris is still knee deep in the beasts, stuck halfway across the bridge and too far away to help.

Twist kicks one vinnlan over the edge of the bridge, then spins round to SLAM her bat into another, but she's downed by three strikes in quick succession from three more vinnlans, and soon she's pinned down and defenceless just like Danyael and Julie.

Chris finally spots that the rest of the team are in trouble, but the moment's hesitation is enough for his katana to be knocked out of his hands, and a particularly large and fearsome vinnlan to get close enough to wrap its hands round his throat, lifting Chris off the ground.

VINNLAN

Thieves!

CHRIS

(struggling)

We're... not...

VINNLAN

Raiders! Steal what must be kept!

CHRIS

No... you don't...

VINNLAN

Silence!

POW! It SLAPS him and sends Chris flying back through the air, landing heavily on his back several feet away.

The vinnlans scatter and give Chris some room as he pushes himself to his feet, allowing the larger vinnlan to walk slowly up to him. Chris defiantly stands his ground.

CHRIS

We're not here to steal anything.

VINNLAN

Lies! All humans come here to take what is not theirs, to steal what must be kept!

CHRIS

(frowns)

What do you mean, 'what must be kept'?

The vinnlan makes a low growling noise of displeasure, and Chris' eyes flick to the rest of the team - the vinnlans restraining Twist and the others seem to be waiting for the larger vinnlan to make the next move. Chris eyes the bulky creature cautiously as it circles him.

CHRIS (cont'd)

I can assure you, we mean you no harm.

TWIST

(yells over)

Yeah, all that kicking just then? Purely self defense.

VINNLAN

(to Twist)

Quiet!

TWIST

What? You guys started it!

CHRIS

(snaps)

Twist! Not the time.

(to Vinnlan)

I think you need to explain to me what's going on down here. You said humans have been taking things from you. What 'things,' exactly?

The vinnlan narrows its eyes, looking Chris up and down as though deciding whether to trust him. Chris raises his hands slowly to show he's not a threat.

CHRIS (cont'd)

I'm unarmed. I'm not going to attack you. Tell me what's been taken and what its significance is, and maybe we can help one another.

The vinnlan stares back at him for a beat, then nods once. It flicks its head round to its comrades pinning Twist and the others down, and makes a series of brief CLICKS to communicate with them.

The vinnlans obediently release the team, and Twist pouts as she smooths herself back down and retrieves her bat, pointing at the nearest vinnlan.

TWIST

You're lucky he's a good negotiator. One more second, and pow! I'd have got you.

The vinnlans exchange confused looks, as we cut over to:

23 INT. UNDERGROUND NETWORK - TEMPLE - DAY.

23

The lead vinnlan ushers the team into the large ruined temple, holding a tall wooden staff with a smaller but equally bright version of one of the glowing spheres from the bridge on its tip.

Chris and Julie look suitably impressed as they examine the temple - before it fell into disrepair, it was clearly an impressive monument, with the remnants of mosaics, statues and ornate dioramas spread around.

CHRIS

What is this place? Or, rather, what was this place?

VINNLAN

Opening of evil.

Twist opens her mouth to make another wisecrack, but a shake of Danyael's head silences her.

VINNLAN (cont'd)

Beings from other worlds, dark places, they would use this place to enter our world, try to destroy and control it.

JULIE

And have your people always been here to stop them?

VINNLAN

(nods)

Many more places like this, all built around thin points in the walls between dimensions.

The vinnlan walks towards one of the larger mosaics, which depicts a great battle in which many vinnlans are being slaughtered by a monstrous, scorpion-like creature.

VINNLAN (cont'd)

The battles have been many, and my people are now few in number.

CHRIS

But I imagine the weak spots in the world are still just as common?

(CONTINUED)

The vinnlan nods, heading towards the remnants of a wide altar at the far end of the temple.

VINNLAN

My ancestors left temples like this to make sure the openings could always be guarded, leaving packs of my people sleeping here to defend them, but now the humans on the surface have taken away the things we need.

TWIST

Those objects in Manon's back room, right?

JULIE

That fits - maybe they're artefacts that the vinnlans used to keep the dimensions sealed up?

CHRIS

Quite possibly. The point is that they can't stay as trophies in Manon's private collection, they need to be down here where they belong.

DANYAEL

Do you think he took them on purpose?

CHRIS

I'm starting to think our friend Monsieur Manon knows a lot more than he's letting on.

TWIST

See? Told you! Evil.

Chris looks over to the vinnlan, who is sighing heavily - the creature looks like there's a whole world of responsibility on his shoulders. Chris turns back to Julie.

CHRIS

And I think I know just how to get him to tell us what he's up to.

Chris grins, and a bemused Julie raises an eyebrow before we cut back to:

Manon watches one of his servants finish sweeping up the broken glass from the raid on his study earlier. There is a KNOCK at the study door, and Manon heads over.

He opens the door to Julie, who is wide-eyed and frantic, covered with cuts and scratches as she nearly faints into his arms.

MANON

Madame Kingston? Julie! Can you
'ear me?

Manon carries her over to his high-backed leather chair and sets her in it, turning to the servant.

MANON (cont'd)

Water, *rapidement!*

The servant nods and hustles out of the room as Manon gently pats Julie's cheek, trying to rouse her. She moans and stirs, her eyelids fluttering as she turns to him.

MANON (cont'd)

What 'appened? Where is
Christopher?

JULIE

(groggy)

We were... attacked.. More of
those... creatures...

MANON

Merde. Has anyone been killed or
hurt?

JULIE

(shakes head)

I don't think so... they said they
were leaving... I think they took
Chris, Twist and Danyael with
them...

Julie sits up, an intense look in her eyes as she grabs Manon by the shoulders.

JULIE (cont'd)

You've got to help them! I managed
to get away, but...

MANON

Do not fear, madame. I will take
some of my security team and go
down there myself to bring your
friends back. You are quite sure
the creatures are gone?

JULIE

(nods)

All of them. That whole place is
empty now.

Manon stands, stepping back as the servant bustles back into the room with a large glass of water which Julie gratefully sips from.

MANON

Bon. I must go.

Manon turns to leave, but Julie jumps to her feet.

JULIE

No! I'm coming with you.

Manon slowly turns back round, raising an eyebrow as Julie throws him a pleading look.

JULIE (cont'd)

I have to know if they're alright,
or if...

MANON

(beat; nods)
Very well.

JULIE

Don't worry about me. I can field
strip an M-16 with my eyes closed.

Manon stares at her for a beat, then cracks open a broad grin and laughs.

MANON

And yet for some reason, I am not
surprised! Come.

Manon motions for her to follow as he leaves, and as Julie heads across the study we cut to:

Manon leads ten of his security guards, all of whom are armed to the teeth with rifles and submachine-guns, all carrying torches to cut through the darkness of the abandoned corridors. Julie walks by Manon's side, carrying a handgun.

JULIE

(points)
This way. They came from over here
and overwhelmed us.

Julie leads the group towards the stone archway as the security team's torches pick it out. Manon hangs back to talk to one of the team, DREW, as Julie heads out of frame.

MANON

Did you bring everything we will
need?

DREW

(nods)

Yes, sir.

MANON

Good. Make sure we are ready, in case those things decide to come back.

Drew glances down at the bulky shoulder bag he's carrying as he and Manon join the others in front of the archway.

JULIE

The vinnlans took Chris and the others through there. I didn't get to see what happened after that, I'm afraid running and getting help was the only choice I had.

Manon lays a comforting hand on her shoulder as he steps past her, staring into the darkness beyond the archway.

MANON

You did the right thing, Julie.

Manon turns to his men, loading his rifle with a loud CLICK and waiting as they all follow suit.

MANON (cont'd)

Be on your guard, *monsieurs*, these creatures are fast and tough. Like Drew's mother.

Manon grins as the rest of his team chuckle at his joke, before he turns and steps through the archway.

The assembled torch beams make out some of the bridge and the temple beyond, but the entire chamber is deserted this time round.

Julie follows Manon as he leads the team across the bridge, heading straight for the temple.

Manon is the first through into the high-ceilinged, dusty temple, lowering his rifle and sweeping the temple walls with his torch as his men file in behind him.

Julie watches them, confused, as they start to set down their weapons and backpacks, taking out a variety of strange-looking objects and placing them at set points around the room.

JULIE

Uh... what's going on? What are they doing?

Manon looks at Julie and smiles - but it's far from friendly, and she takes a wary step backwards.

MANON

Now that those *monstres* 'ave gone and left us in peace, I can finally let this temple do what it was supposed to do.

Julie looks round at Manon's men again - they're moving with organised efficiency, obviously knowing exactly what to do as they continue to slot things into place around the room.

Stone tablets are pressed back into gaps in the mosaics, statues are twisted back into place on the podiums, and Drew takes five of the small glowing spheres from his bag, placing them into five circular holes across the surface of the altar.

Julie looks around in alarm as the spheres flare to life, quickly filling the whole temple with yellow light. She rounds on Manon.

JULIE

Alright, what the hell are you doing down here?

Manon steps towards her menacingly, and she raises her gun at him as she takes another step back.

MANON

As I said, *madame*, this place was built for a task, and I intend to make sure it can perform that task at last.

Julie thumbs the safety off her handgun and aims it squarely at Manon's head, but he doesn't flinch, taking a step closer.

JULIE

(serious)

Call your men off. I don't need to know what they're doing to know that it's wrong.

MANON

Are you going to shoot me, Julie?

JULIE

If I have to.

MANON

Then go ahead. I'm not going to stop unless you kill me.

Julie stares him out for a beat - then swiftly aims at his arm and pulls the trigger - but nothing happens. Manon chuckles and deftly snatches the gun from her hands.

MANON (cont'd)

You think I would give you a gun that actually works?

Julie backs up as Manon advances on her, finding herself trapped against a stone pillar as he closes in.

MANON (cont'd)

Your little ruse back at my manor was quite effective, for a moment I was fooled. You are quite the actress!

JULIE

(defiant)

Yeah, well, I have many hidden talents.

MANON

A shame, then, that I will not 'ave the chance to discover them all.

JULIE

(blinks)

What?

Manon LUNGES for her, and despite Julie fighting back with all she's got, he's too strong for her, wrenching her arms round behind her back to restrain her.

MANON

(to Drew)

Is the altar ready for the sacrifice?

DREW

Yes, sir.

JULIE

(horrified)

The what?!?

Manon shoves Julie towards the altar, as Drew readies a set of wrist and ankle restraints to hold her down.

Julie doubles her efforts to break free, but Drew shuts her up with a hard SLAP across her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

Manon glares at him, then PUNCHES Drew with his free hand.

MANON

Idiote! What do you think you are doing?

DREW

I-I'm sorry, sir, I thought-

MANON

I do not pay you enough to think!
Now continue with the preparations!
I 'ave waited too long to 'ave-

CHRIS (O.S.)

Oh dear, oh dear.

Manon freezes, then spins round.

Chris, Twist and Danyael have walked into the temple, all armed, and Chris is wagging a scolding finger at Manon.

CHRIS (cont'd)

You don't hit one of my friends,
Manon. That's not the kind of thing
I can just forget about in a hurry.

Manon glances down at Julie, who smirks triumphantly back up at him.

JULIE

So do I get my Oscar yet?

CHRIS

(to Twist)
What would you say our Gallic
friend's first error was?

TWIST

I'm going to go with 'thinking we
wouldn't suss out he was evil,'
chief.

CHRIS

That's right. And his second?

DANYAEL

Thinking we wouldn't work out how
to stop him.

CHRIS

Absolutely.
(to Manon)
See? They're quite clever, really,
when you give them chance to show
it.

MANON

(laughs)

I 'ope you brought more backup than your two vampire friends, Christopher! When I complete the ritual and bring the Skorpione back into this world, then we will see where all of your posturing gets you!

Chris SNAPS his fingers as though just remembering something important.

CHRIS

Backup! Ah, yes, I knew I'd forgotten something.

He nods to Twist, who puts her fingers in her mouth and WHISTLES loudly.

The whistle ECHOES around the temple for a few beats - then out of the shadows behind Chris and the vampire duo, a large pack of the vinnlans slowly strut into the temple. The creatures HISS threateningly at Manon and his team, looking ready for a fight.

Manon's security team grab their rifles and quickly back up, raising their weapons to try and cover the growing number of vinnlans stalking into the temple.

Manon fixes Chris with a cold stare as Chris beckons to him.

CHRIS (cont'd)

As Twist is so fond of saying... bring it on.

Manon's face creases up with anger, and from that we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

28 INT. UNDERGROUND NETWORK - TEMPLE - DAY.

28

It's a stand off. Chris, Twist and Danyael backed up by the army of vinnlans, facing off against Manon and his six heavily armed security guards, the captive Julie still held tight by Manon.

CHRIS

Let her go, Manon.

MANON

And why would I do that?

CHRIS

Because if you do, I'll only take one of your arms.

MANON

(smirks)

You show a lot of spirit, considering what you're about to face!

TWIST

(mocking)

Yeah, yeah, waah waah 'you'll never defeat me,' heard it! Last guy who used those lines on us ended up having to work out what order to put his organs back into his body.

(twirls bat)

How's your biology these days?

MANON

There is power in this place, just waiting for a man like myself to 'arness it.

TWIST

Using those portal things, right? The weak points in the fabric of the world, or whatever they are? Yeah, we know.

MANON

Then you know what I plan to do.

TWIST

What do you think's on the other side of those gateways, Frenchie? It ain't all sunshine and hollow chocolate bunnies, you know.

(CONTINUED)

MANON

Oh, believe me...

Manon reaches into his backpack and draws out a golden staff, which has a stylised, monstrous scorpion on its tip.

MANON (cont'd)

... I know.

Manon turns to Drew as Chris keeps his eyes fixed on Julie, trying to send her a silent message.

MANON (cont'd)

Is everything in place?

DREW

Ready to begin, sir.

MANON

Good, good.

(to Chris)

Well, it was a pleasure to meet you, Christopher, but I'm afraid our time together 'as come to an unfortunate end.

(to his men)

Kill them all.

The security team OPEN FIRE, spraying the assembled vinnlans with bullets, but Chris quickly waves his hand through the air before him, creating a ripple of blue energy that stops all the bullets dead in their tracks.

CHRIS

(to vinnlans)

Now!!

With a mighty HOWL, the assembled vinnlans CHARGE towards Manon and his crew, who keep up the barrage of gunfire.

Many of the creatures fall under the onslaught, but by sheer weight of numbers they manage to swarm the nearest two of the security team, who disappear beneath a wave of dark green flesh with final SCREAMS of terror.

Chris, Twist and Danyael race forward as Manon drags Julie back towards the altar where Drew is waiting, Julie still fighting back every step of the way.

The vinnlans are starting to lose the momentum as more hails of gunfire rake across their numbers, and despite Chris slicing a nearby guard's rifle in half and then knocking the man to the floor with a swift punch, the creatures start to fall back.

(CONTINUED)

Over by the altar, Julie's eyes widen in horror as Drew produces a large, curved sacrificial dagger from his bag, and Manon grabs her arm, stretching it out over a symbol etched into the altar's surface - that of a huge scorpion.

JULIE

No! Chris!!

MANON

Quiet! I promise I will make this quick if you do not fight back!

Julie throws a stone cold glare at Manon - then ELBOWS him in the chest as hard as she can.

Manon splutters and staggers backwards, and as Drew lunges for Julie with the dagger, she manages to dodge out of its path, the razor-sharp blade catching her arm and taking a slice out of it.

Twist floors another guard with a well-timed swing of her bat, but looks up to see another training his gun on her.

As he opens fire, she plants her feet against the nearest stone pillar and FLIPS gracefully back through the air, arcing over the trail of bullets to land neatly on her feet again - and SMASH her bat against the guard.

TWIST

Learned that one from Chun Li, baumgartner!

DANYAEL (O.S.)

Twist!!

Danyael DIVES into frame and shoves himself and Twist to the ground as another volley of bullets tears past them, missing the duo by inches.

Twist blinks as she looks up at Danyael, lying awkwardly on top of her.

TWIST

Uh, bullets can't actually kill us, you know!

DANYAEL

Well, no... but they hurt.

A beat. Twist nods, then the two of them spring back to their feet and dive back into battle.

Chris marches straight towards Manon, pausing to dodge a clumsy attack by one of the guards, grabbing the guard and flipping him up and over to SLAM him back down to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

Manon is recovering from the blow to his chest and draws a handgun from a shoulder holster, squeezing off three shots in quick succession as Chris closes in.

Chris recoils with each hit, but keeps striding forward, raising his sword and chopping down, missing Manon by a fraction as Manon falls backwards, out of the way.

Julie and Drew are chasing one another round the altar, Julie trying to make a break for safety but finding Drew cutting her off every time.

Finally, Julie manages to dash for freedom, but Drew is too fast and tries to tackle her. She turns and SHOVES back against him, and Drew GULPS, his body freezing.

Julie looks down to see that she's managed to turn his dagger round and press it into his gut, and before she can react Drew falls backwards, sprawling across the altar.

Chris aims his katana at Manon's throat, as the French villain tries to shuffle backwards, away from him.

CHRIS

It's over, Manon. Whatever you were trying to do here, I think we can safely say you failed.

Manon looks round to see Twist and Danyael double team the last of his security team, punching him to the ground. Bodies of his men and the vinnlans litter the floor of the temple, but a handful of the lizard-like creatures are still standing as the smoke gradually clears.

CHRIS (cont'd)

You're coming with us. I know people who take care of messes like you, and I think they'll be quite pleased to get their hands on-

JULIE

(interrupts)
Chris?

He turns to see Julie staring down at Drew's body.

JULIE (cont'd)

I think we may have a problem.

Chris looks back to Manon, but as Twist and Danyael arrive in frame to keep an eye on him, Chris steps over to Julie.

CHRIS

What is it?

She points to the altar's surface - and we see that the blood from Drew's fatal wound has pooled across the altar, gathering in the scorpion symbol, which is now PULSING with a baleful red light.

JULIE

On a scale of one to ten on the
'Not Good' chart, I'm thinking this
is at least a seven.

CHRIS

More like a nine...
(turns to others)
Get back, all of you!

Chris quickly pulls Julie away from the altar - just as there is a FLASH of white light, and a deafening sound like the tearing of metal.

Everyone claps their hands over their ears - except Danyael - and stares upwards as a jagged line of white energy starts to form in the air over the altar.

Manon begins to LAUGH, and a furious Chris reaches down to grab him, dragging him back to his feet.

CHRIS (cont'd)

What have you done?

MANON

It's coming! It's finally coming!

CHRIS

What is? Manon, what have you-

VINNLAN

(weakly)
The Skorpione!

Chris turns to see the lead vinnlan, covered with battle wounds, is standing beside him, staring up at the growing energy disturbance.

VINNLAN (cont'd)

(looks to Manon)
This human has succeeded in opening
a wound between the dimensions.
Soon, they shall return.

TWIST

What, already?!? Will somebody tell
us what the frig a Skorpione is?

Twist is answered as a colossal ROAR rips through the temple, shaking the very foundations, and all eyes turn to the energy.

(CONTINUED)

It looks like a literal rip in the air itself, gradually widening to reveal some kind of hellish landscape beyond - and a huge dark SHAPE that moves past, too quick to get a good look.

Chris shakes the still laughing Manon.

CHRIS

How do we stop it?

MANON

You can't! The energies cannot be destroyed!

Chris desperately looks round - and then spots that all of the objects Manon and his men brought back into the temple are GLOWING, most noticeably the four stone tablets pressed into the mosaics. Chris points to them, forced now to shout over the rising volume of the HOWLING the tear is making.

CHRIS

The stones! Smash the stones!

Twist nods, grabbing Danyael and racing towards the nearest mosaic.

DANYAEL

What do we do?

TWIST

What else? Use brute force!

She rears back and SLAMS her bat into the tablet - but it doesn't break.

TWIST (cont'd)

Friesacher! Now what?

She turns to Danyael to see he's grabbed one of the security guards' rifles, and as Twist quickly ducks back he OPENS FIRE, shattering the tablet in a storm of bullets.

As soon as the tablet explodes, the tear of energy starts to fluctuate, shaking violently in the air as whatever's on the other side ROARS again.

CHRIS

The others! Quickly!

Danyael turns and FIRES at the other mosaics - his aim isn't so good at distance, but he manages to take out two more, leaving the portal gyrating wildly in the air.

Danyael turns to the last one and squeezes the rifle's trigger - but it clicks. No more bullets. He quickly drops it and grabs another - also empty.

(CONTINUED)

Panicking, he tries to find another gun - but Twist calmly steps into frame, aiming a shotgun at the final tablet.

TWIST

Sayonara.

MANON

No!!

Manon takes advantage of the distraction to break free of Chris' grip, racing towards Twist to stop her.

Chris reaches for him - but with a sudden CRACK like thunder, a gargantuan CLAW pushes through the portal, looking like an oversized scorpion's claw as it SWIPES through the air.

Manon is only a few feet away when Twist FIRES - and the tablet EXPLODES into fragments.

The portal instantly SWELLS with unleashed energy, and Twist looks round to see a streak of white energy zap out from the portal, heading straight for her!

She barely has time to GASP - but as Manon races towards her, the bolt suddenly diverts towards him, striking the staff in his hand and enveloping him in BLUE ENERGY.

Twist recoils, and just has enough time to register what happened before Manon is torn back towards the portal at blinding speed, and with another FLASH of white light, the tear vanishes.

The severed claw of whatever was trying to get through CRASHES to the temple floor, narrowly missing Julie.

The team take a few moments to catch their breath as the HOWLS of the creature missing its arm fade away, Chris heading for Julie.

CHRIS

Are you alright?

JULIE

(examining wounded arm)

I'll be okay, nothing too major.
What just happened?

CHRIS

I'm not entirely sure...

VINNLAN

The human was taken to the beast's realm.

TWIST

'Beast'? I think whatever that thing was with the big ass scorpion's claw, it qualifies for a more dramatic word than plain old 'beast'!

VINNLAN

(to Chris)

There are more of them. Many more. All waiting for an opportunity to break free of their world, and plunder ours.

Chris looks down at the huge severed claw, nodding.

CHRIS

Then we'd better make sure that doesn't happen, hadn't we?

The vinnlan bows its head respectfully, and Chris returns the gesture. Twist wanders over to inspect the claw.

TWIST

Can I keep it?

CHRIS

No.

TWIST

Why not?

CHRIS

Because its' a bloody great scorpion monster's claw, that's why not! What on earth would you do with it?

TWIST

I dunno. But I figure, how many chances are you gonna get to have one of these things? There's got to be something I can use it for.

Chris throws a despairing look at her, then reaches for Julie, lays an arm round her shoulders and leads her away.

Twist looks round, then reaches down and tries to heave the claw away. It's too heavy to budge, and after a few strained attempts to move it, she gives up with a defeated HUFF.

TWIST (cont'd)

Nobody ever lets me have anything cool.

Twist turns on her heel and walks away, and we cut to:

29

EXT. REAR GROUNDS - WOODED AREA - EVENING.

29

The sun has set as Chris and the team climb back out of the hole that led down into the underground network, Twist stretching out and brushing some stray dust out of her hair as she waits for the others.

TWIST

So where do you think Manon went?

DANYAEL

A galaxy far, far away, if we're lucky.

TWIST

(scoffs)

And when has that ever happened?

CHRIS

Let's just mark him down as 'gone' and leave it at that.

TWIST

(nods)

And can we make some kind of deal that this is the last time we go running around underground? All this lack of fresh air can't be good for a girl's complexion.

CHRIS

Well, if they will keep building these ancient temples several feet below sea level, I'm afraid there's not much I can do about it.

DANYAEL

Besides, that was fun, right?

Everyone gives Danyael an incredulous look - 'fun'?

JULIE

I think we need to have a little talk about your use of the word 'fun,' Danyael.

TWIST

Yeah, I'm starting to worry about you. Where's the cowardly Spook I used to know and love?

DANYAEL

(shrugs)

I'm just getting used to what we do now, is all.

(CONTINUED)

Chris pats Danyael on the shoulder as he walks past.

CHRIS

Something tells me you'll get plenty more chances to see some action yet, Danyael.

DANYAEL

(grins)
Cool.

The team start to leave the wood, heading back towards the manor's grounds. Twist hangs back to talk to Danyael.

TWIST

I think I'm definitely a bad influence on you.

DANYAEL

Who says that's a bad thing?

TWIST

I do! I don't want another version of me running around, I can barely keep up with myself!

They share a chuckle, before hearing:

VINNLAN (O.S.)

Vampire!

Chris, Twist and Danyael all turn round. It takes a beat for Julie to realise they've stopped and turn round herself.

The lead vinnlan is standing by the edge of the hole, its hands clasped before its chest.

VINNLAN (cont'd)

I have something for you.

TWIST

Which one of us?

Chris steps forward, and the vinnlan bows to him again.

TWIST (cont'd)

Oh, how come he gets the royal treatment all of a sudden?

DANYAEL

(lights cigarette)
'Cause we're the sidekicks.

TWIST

(hits him)

What have I told you about using
the 's' word?

The vinnlan holds out its hands and motions for Chris to do the same. He does so - and the vinnlan drops the cloth package it took back from Manon's study.

Chris' eyes light up as he unwraps it to reveal the small brass component.

VINNLAN

We sensed that you need this more
than we do.

CHRIS

I do indeed. Thank you.

VINNLAN

Consider us even.

The vinnlan bows, Chris returns the gesture, and with that the creature turns and steps out over the hole, dropping swiftly out of sight.

Chris turns the component round in his hand as Twist peers over at it.

TWIST

So what is it?

CHRIS

It's a piece of the machine.

JULIE

The healing device? How do you
know?

CHRIS

I've pretty much memorised the
blueprints. I'm not sure what this
part does specifically, but I know
it's something we need.

TWIST

Good stuff, chief. We stopped the
bad guy and got you a little
souvenir as well. Sounds like a
good day's work to me!

(beat)

Now for God's sake, let's go find a
bar or something! I need food and
vodka, in that order.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

Chris grins and leads the team again as they exit the woods, before we cut to:

30 EXT. DEMON WORLD - NIGHT.

30

We're looking out over a twisted, nightmarish landscape - a blackened, burnt out forest is before us as tall mountain ranges line the background, fierce thunderstorms shaking the ground all around us.

We pick up a pair of feet as they run into frame, along with the ragged breathing of someone who's been on the run for some time, before panning up to see that it's Manon!

He's cut and bleeding, caked with mud, and as he throws a desperate look over his shoulder his foot catches on an exposed tree root, and he clatters to the ground.

Breathless, Manon scabbles across the filthy ground, cowering behind a boulder as something FLAPS past overhead, making an unearthly SCREECHING sound.

Manon looks scared out of his wits, hugging his knees tightly and rocking back and forth. Wherever he is, it's clearly not somewhere he wants to be!

He hears the THUD of a heavy footstep nearby and sits up, alert, his eyes scanning the landscape.

There's another THUD, much closer this time, and Manon jumps to his feet, off and running in an instant.

He doesn't look back as he sprints onwards, passing more burned trees and skirting round the edge of a large river of jet black liquid, before coming to a halt, his hands on his thighs as he doubles over, gasping for breath.

He straightens, regaining his composure, allowing his breathing to settle down.

Then he turns round.

His eyes widen in shock, and he just has time to start to SCREAM as a shadow falls across him, and we:

BLACK OUT:

END OF SHOW